

Telephone: (609) 452-6502  
FAX: (609) 987-5070  
Internet: Ants.Leetmaa@noaa.gov

December 4, 2001 R/E/GF

MEMORANDUM FOR: David Evans, Assistant Administrator  
Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

FROM: Ants Leetmaa, Director [Ants Leetmaa signature dated 12/4/01]  
GFDL

SUBJECT: Telecommuting

This is to request your approval to implement OAR's Draft Telecommuting Program, with the following local adaptations, at GFDL as a six-month pilot program:

1. Page 4, third hyphenated bullet, "Long-Term Regularly Scheduled", under Section AUTHORIZED TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS and Page 6, second paragraph under Section ESTABLISHING THE WORK SCHEDULE – During its six-month pilot, GFDL will permit eligible employees to Telecommute up to one day per week.
2. Page 7, second paragraph, under Section ESTABLISHING THE WORK SCHEDULE – Employee's participating in GFDL's telecommuting program should respond, when necessary, within one working hour to all telephone and e-mail messages.
3. Page 8, under Section HOURS OF DUTY, TIME AND ATTENDANCE AND PAY ISSUES, subsection Certification and Control of Time and Attendance – add at the end of the subsection: GFDL Telecommuting employees shall provide a one-paragraph e-mail to their supervisor specifying their accomplishments on their telecommuting day(s) that pay period.
4. Page 10, second paragraph under section FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ISSUES – At least during the sixth month pilot period, GFDL will not furnish computing equipment, such as PCs and scientific workstations, or telecommunications connections, such as ISDN, DSL, or cable connections and will not provide IT support, except to answer questions if possible if issues arise with an employee's home system.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ Let's Discuss \_\_\_\_\_

[Louisa Koch signature for David Evans] \_\_\_\_\_  
David Evans, Assistant Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DRAFT

**OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH  
TELEWORK PROGRAM**

**AUGUST 2001**

DRAFT

**OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH (OAR)  
TELEWORK PROGRAM**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b><u>SECTION</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
BACKGROUND .....	1
POLICY .....	1
SCOPE .....	3
AUTHORIZED TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS .....	3
OVERSIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	4
IDENTIFYING POSITIONS SUITED FOR TELEWORK .....	5
SELECTING TELEWORK PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS .....	5
COMPLETING THE TELEWORK AGREEMENT .....	6
ESTABLISHING THE WORK SCHEDULE .....	6
HOURS OF DUTY, TIME AND ATTENDANCE AND PAY ISSUES .....	7
FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ISSUES .....	10
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO TELEWORKING EMPLOYEES .....	11
COMPUTER SOFTWARE COPYRIGHTS .....	11
PRIVACY ACT, SENSITIVE OR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION .....	12
SECURE OPERATIONS .....	12
PREPARING FOR THE TELEWORK ARRANGEMENT .....	12
TELEWORK ORIENTATION AND TRAINING .....	13
<b>ATTACHMENT 1 - TELEWORK AGREEMENT.....</b>	<b>A-1</b>
<b>ATTACHMENT 2 - SELF-CERTIFICATION SAFETY CHECKLIST .....</b>	<b>A-4</b>
<b>ATTACHMENT 3 - SCREEN-OUT CRITERIA FOR TELEWORK .....</b>	<b>A-7</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

Telework refers to paid employment performed away from the conventional office, either at home or at an alternative office site, for an agreed-upon portion of the workweek. Telework should not be confused with home-based businesses or independent contractor arrangements in the home. It also differs from situations where employees permanently work out of their home, traveling daily to clients or audit and inspection sites on premises not controlled by their employers.

Telework is a management tool that can provide a variety of benefits. Employers benefit by attracting and retaining a high-quality work force, reducing employee absenteeism, and accommodating employees with disabilities or medical problems while they are still able to work. Employees benefit by reducing commuting time and costs, capitalizing on their peak productivity periods, and increased flexibility in coordinating work priorities with personal and family responsibilities. Society and the environment benefit by improving employment opportunities for the disabled and mobility-restricted persons, reducing productivity problems associated with dependent care, and reducing traffic congestion and its associated health, pollution and energy problems.

Telework in the Federal government grew from a project begun in 1990. The President's Council on Management Improvement (PCMI) sponsored the Government-wide Flexible Workplace Project to examine the feasibility of flexible workplace arrangements, on a limited basis, through pilot tests. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the General Services Administration (GSA) were given key roles in coordinating and evaluating telecommuting arrangements on behalf of the PCMI. During this test period, the home was the primary alternative work site. OPM evaluated the two-year pilot performance of the work-at-home component of the project and found it to be successful.

In 1994, The Department of Commerce's (DOC) Office of Human Resources Management published guidelines to assist Bureau management in establishing flexible workplace programs. Many of those guidelines are incorporated now in the DOC's Telework Program Policy.

Later, the GSA established Federal Telecenters in selected Maryland and Virginia communities for use by Federal employees who work in the Washington, D.C. area or in other locations within the United States. The Federal Telecenters offer an alternative workplace in outlying locations to those individuals who cannot or prefer not to work at home. Each Federal Telecenter provides the teleworker with required computer equipment, telecommunications, and administrative support.

## **POLICY**

In accordance with the provisions of Section 359 of Public Law 106-346, it is the DOC's policy that eligible employees will be allowed to work at sites other than their official workplace in a DOC facility during all or a portion of their regular work week. To implement this policy to the

fullest extent possible, **OAR** management will establish internal telework plans and procedures pertaining to their workforce to:

- identify those positions that are entirely appropriate for telework arrangements,
- identify job duties within remaining positions that are suitable for telework arrangements,
- authorize and obligate funds for the payment of expenses associated with approved telework arrangements,
- promote telework opportunities to their workforce,
- approve employee participation in telework arrangements,
- orient new employees and supervisors regarding telework participation, and
- administer and evaluate the telework program

**Requests for a telework arrangement must be submitted through, and endorsed by, the employee's immediate supervisor and then cleared through the chain-of-command before submission to the appropriate Director as follows: For OAR Headquarters employees: the Executive Director; for Laboratory employees: Each Laboratory Director.**

The approving official for a telework agreement under the DOC Telework Program will be at one level above the immediate supervisor of the participating employee. Approvals will be made in consultation with the employee's supervisor, based on the nature and content of the work to be performed and the employee's performance rating.

Telework agreements will be prepared in writing for regularly scheduled arrangements to document the terms and conditions for teleworking. Employees are not required to participate in the program. In addition, management cannot coerce an employee to participate in teleworking arrangements. Participating employees may terminate their telework agreements at any time.

Telework locations may include a GSA Federal Telecenter or the employee's home (a space specifically set aside as an office or other appropriate area in the employee's residence). The opportunity to use GSA Federal Telecenter is subject to available Fiscal Year funding.

Teleworking is not an employee right. The overall interests of the office must take precedence over working off-site on a scheduled off-site day if a conflict arises. When this occurs, the employee should be allowed to re-schedule the off-site day to another day in the same pay period. Supervisors may make adjustments of individual schedules to meet the needs of the office.

There is no automatic right of the employee to continue participation in the event of a change of supervisor, work situation, or job requirements. The approving official or immediate supervisor may end participation in the program for individuals, an organizational segment or the entire office if operational problems occur that interfere with the mission of the organization. Unless otherwise precluded, management shall provide 30 days notice prior to canceling an employee's participation or modifying the telework agreement to allow sufficient time for the employee to reestablish arrangements for commuting to work, or for child care or elder care.

Although telecommuting will give some employees more time for their family responsibilities, they may not use duty time for providing dependent care or any purpose other than official duties. Failure to adhere to this policy shall be sufficient reason for a supervisor to terminate an employee's participation in a telework arrangement.

## SCOPE

**Applicability of Provisions.** The provisions of this document apply to all employees participating in the DOC Telework Program. For purposes of telework, the alternative work site is considered to be an official Government work site. The official duty station will be the conventional office work site.

**Non-Discrimination Statement.** Participants in the DOC Telework Program will be selected without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, or reprisal.

**Standards of Conduct and Ethics.** Teleworkers are bound by DOC standards of conduct and ethics while working at the alternative work site. Employees are reminded that all standards governing ethical behavior remain in effect regardless of where or when work is performed.

**Telework Arrangement Modifications and Termination.** Employees are not required to participate in the DOC Telework Program, nor is teleworking an employee right. Since telework is a management work option, the employee does not have an automatic right to continue participation in the event of a change of supervisor, work situation, or job requirements. Supervisors may make modifications to individual schedules to meet the mission needs of the office, including requiring a teleworker to work in the conventional office on a day scheduled for the alternative work site. Management may terminate participation in the DOC Telework Program by individual employees, for an organizational segment or the entire office if operational problems occur. The overall interests of the office must take precedence over working off-site on a scheduled telework day if a conflict arises. Management shall provide sufficient notice whenever feasible, prior to modifying or terminating an employee's telework agreement.

## AUTHORIZED TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS

The Department authorizes three distinct types of telework arrangements, based on the realization that organizational and employee needs vary considerably and should be addressed on a case-by case basis. Some employees require only occasional periods of work place flexibility, while others need to telework for longer periods or under regularly scheduled arrangements. The intent in offering these types of arrangements is to provide individual supervisors and employees with maximum flexibility to establish an arrangement that is responsive to their unique work and personal situations. DOC employees will request one of the following telework arrangements:

- **Episodic or Non-Regularly Scheduled** - Defined as infrequent periods of time when projects/assignments have short turn-around times and/or require intense concentration. Under such circumstances the teleworker typically works for a day or so at home, away from typical office distractions. This enables the employee to focus more effectively on completion of the assignment.
- **Short-Term Regularly Scheduled** - An arrangement for short periods of time generally for 6 months or less. Some examples where such an arrangements may work well include the following:
  - (1) during an employee's convalescence from a short-term injury or illness, or maternity/paternity reasons; or
  - (2) when the employee's office work site is not usable e.g. during office renovation.
- **Long-Term Regularly Scheduled** - An arrangement designed to last over 6 months (typically for 1 year), in which the teleworker works away from the conventional office for all or a portion of each pay period. Arrangements may be extended on an annual basis by mutual agreement between the teleworker and his or her supervisor. This type of arrangement may be used to:
  - (1) Reduce office space and associated costs;
  - (2) Attract and retain high-quality employees in key occupations and positions;
  - (3) Improve productivity;
  - (4) Improve service to clients;
  - (5) Improve access or as a reasonable accommodation for disabled employees; or
  - (6) Reduce commuting time.

## PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**The Office of Human Resources Management** is responsible for Departmental oversight of the DOC Telework Program and any reporting requirements to the Office of Personnel Management. Each Bureau/Organization is responsible for the funding, administration, operation and evaluation of its telework program. Supervisors are responsible for day-to-day operations, modification to individual telework agreements to meet the mission needs of the units they supervise, and maintenance of telework records and information necessary for program reporting and evaluation purposes.

**The Approving Official** will authorize all participation in the telework arrangements within the Bureau/Organization, and will assure appropriate funding, evaluate the impact of the program on the efficiency, effectiveness, and employee satisfaction of work operations within their organizations. **Approving Officials are responsible for documenting and retaining the approval/disapproval decision and rationale for such a decision**, for each employee request to participate in the telework program.

**The Supervisor** is responsible for the overall management and success of teleworking arrangements within the work unit, including day-to-day operations, modifications to individual telework agreements to meet the mission needs of the work unit, and maintaining records and information necessary for evaluation of the program.

## **IDENTIFYING POSITIONS SUITED FOR TELEWORK**

Many positions lend themselves to successful telework arrangements. In addition, some portion of other positions that are not entirely suited for telework may be portable and performed at an alternate work site. Work suitable for telework depends on job content, rather than job title, type of appointment, or work schedule. For example, telework is feasible for work that requires thinking and writing -- data analysis, developing project plans and schedules; reviewing documents, writing decisions or reports; telephone-intensive tasks -- setting up a conference, obtaining information, following up on participants in a study; and for computer-oriented tasks -- programming, data entry, and word processing.

Each position's distinct functions, duties and tasks should be examined specifically for the **activities stated in the position screen-out criteria and justification for telework arrangement. [Attachment 3]**

## **SELECTING TELEWORK PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

Selection of participants for telework is a key activity. While there is no fail-safe formula to assure success, the most common characteristics of successful telework participants and criteria for selection are described below.

### **Identifying the Employee**

- The employee demonstrates self-starter characteristics, can function independently, and has demonstrated dependability.
- The employee has good time management and organization skills.
- The employee possesses a high level of job knowledge and skill.
- The employee's overall performance is satisfactory or the equivalent.
- The employee has clearly defined performance standards.
- The employee is willing to sign and abide by a written agreement defining participation and expectations.



- If the alternative work site is the home, the employee is able to satisfy home work station requirements, including necessary equipment, privacy, lack of interruptions, and data security.

### Identifying the Supervisor

- The supervisor is a proponent of telework.
- The supervisor is comfortable with evaluating work performance by measuring performance by results and without direct observation.
- The supervisor is an effective communicator and able to clearly define tasks and expectations and provide ongoing feedback.

## COMPLETING THE TELECOMMUTING WORK AGREEMENT

Prior to participation, telework participants and their supervisors will jointly prepare and sign a Telework Agreement. Supervisors will submit the signed Telework Agreement to their next level supervisor for approval.

The telework agreement [see **attachment 1**] covers the terms and conditions for telework. It also constitutes an agreement by employee and his or her supervisor to adhere to applicable guidelines and policies. The telework agreement covers items such as the voluntary nature of the arrangement; duration of the telework agreement; hours and days of duty at each work site; responsibilities for timekeeping, leave approval and requests for overtime and compensatory time; performance requirements; proper use and safeguards of Government property and records; and standards of conduct.

## ESTABLISHING THE WORK SCHEDULE

Work performed away from the conventional office will vary depending upon the individual arrangements between the employee and the supervisor. **Telework arrangements may be established on either a regularly scheduled (long or short term) or non-regularly scheduled (episodic) basis.**

For telework arrangements established on a long or short term, regularly-scheduled basis, each telework agreement shall provide for a minimum number of days in the office. Successful programs have shown that employees need to spend at least part of the week in the conventional office to minimize isolation and communication problems, facilitate integration of the teleworking employee with co-workers in the conventional office, and to attend required face-to-face meetings.

Telework arrangements may also be approved to permit an employee to work on an episodic basis, for example, when an employee could complete a project more efficiently or when an employee is temporarily incapacitated. In such cases, the work agreement should be as specific as possible concerning the schedule.

Work schedules identify the days and times the employee will work in each work setting. Work schedules can parallel those in the office or be structured to meet the needs of participating employees and their supervisors. The process of establishing work schedules permits **periodic adjustments to achieve an optimal schedule which can meet organizational requirements and suit employee needs.** Work schedules may also include fixed times during the day for supervisor/employee telephone conversations. Establishing such times may be helpful to ensure ongoing communication. Electronic mail and voice mail offer additional supervisor/employee communications options.

A regular schedule makes it easier to stay in touch with colleagues and to be available to clients. Supervisors must approve flexible alternative work schedules in advance to preclude any unintended liability for premium or overtime pay and to ensure proper administration of other employee benefits. In addition, care must be taken not to approve any telework schedule inconsistent or in conflict with provisions made under the Alternative Work Schedules program.

## **HOURS OF DUTY, TIME AND ATTENDANCE AND PAY ISSUES**

**Hours of Duty.** Supervisors may follow the traditional work schedule of eight hours per day, five days per week, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; or permit employees to follow work schedules approved under the Alternative Work Schedule Program. **Completely unstructured arrangements where employees work at the alternative work site at will are not permitted.**

**Overtime Work.** Work schedules, as described below, determine entitlement to overtime compensation. These entitlements remain unchanged.

**Standard Work Schedule (currently 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.).** Overtime work is all hours of work in excess of eight hours in a day or 40 hours in a week which are officially ordered and authorized in writing, in advance, by management. Employees covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) may earn overtime pay, even though the overtime work was voluntary and not officially ordered or approved. The FLSA counts as overtime any work that a supervisor “suffers or permits” his/her subordinates to work. “Suffered and permitted” overtime is any work performed for the benefit of the agency, whether ordered or not, provided the supervisor knew or had reason to believe that the work was being performed and had a chance to stop it, but did not. There is no concept of “suffer and permit” for overtime work performed under flexible work schedule programs.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to regulate and control the use of overtime. Employees are responsible for requesting, in advance, approval to work in excess of their normal hours of

duty. This is particularly important when employees are working at home or at a Federal Telecenter without direct supervisory oversight. The potential liability for FLSA overtime could be hard to control if clear directions are not provided to teleworking employees.

**Flexible Work Schedules under the Alternative Work Schedule Program.** Overtime work is all hours of work in excess of eight hours in a day or 40 hours in a week which are officially ordered in advance by management. For maxiflex flexible schedules, overtime is hours in excess of the 80-hour biweekly work requirement.

**Compressed Work Schedules under the Alternative Work Schedule Program.** Overtime work is all hours officially ordered in excess of the established compressed work schedule. Overtime is not paid for hours worked in excess of eight hours per day or 40 hours per week when part of a compressed work schedule.

**Certification and Control of Time and Attendance.** Proper monitoring and certification of employee work time is critical to the success of the program. The General Accounting Office guidelines regarding employees at remote sites require that agencies establish a time accounting method that provides the supervisor with reasonable assurance that employees at remote sites are working when scheduled. Some approved techniques mentioned, which could be applicable to telecommuting arrangements, include: occasional supervisory telephone calls to an employee during times the employee is scheduled to be on duty; occasional visits by the supervisor to the employee's alternative work site; and determining reasonableness of work output for time spent.

**Leave.** Policies for requesting annual and sick leave, leave without pay, compensatory time, and credit hours, if on a flexible work schedule, remain unchanged. Employees are responsible for requesting leave in advance from supervisors and keeping timekeepers informed of leave usage.

**Administrative Leave, Dismissals, Emergency Closing.** Although a variety of circumstances may affect individual situations, the principles governing administrative leave, dismissals, and closing remain unchanged. The "*Emergency Dismissal or Closure Procedures for Federal Employees Within the Washington, DC, Area*" guidelines developed October 21, 1997 are in effect, and should be consulted by employees and managers. The guidelines may be found on the Internet at the following address: <http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/html/c97-10a.htm>.

These guidelines concern group dismissals or closure of activities in emergency situations (snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, air pollution, power failures, interruption of public transportation, and other situations in which significant numbers of employees are prevented from reporting for work on time or which require agencies to close all or part of their activities. The guideline differentiates between emergencies that occur before the workday begins and those that occur during normal work hours.

**Emergencies That Occur Before The Workday Begins.** When "Federal Agencies are CLOSED" is announced prior to the normal start of the workday, all employees except those designated as "emergency employees" are excused from duty without loss of pay or charge to

leave. This includes those teleworking individuals scheduled to work at home or at a Federal Telecenter, since the conventional office is closed and the associated Government activities are considered closed. Workdays on which a Federal activity is closed are non-workdays for leave purposes, and leave may not be charged for non-workdays.

**Emergencies That Occur During Normal Work Hours.** The ability to conduct work (and the nature of any impediments), whether at home, a telecenter, or the conventional office, determines when an employee may be excused from duty. For example, if hazardous material is found in the conventional office causing the conventional office to close, the employee working at home or at a telecommuting center will normally continue working, unless he/she needs access to resources no longer available at the conventional office. Using this same example, if the employee's work site at home or at a telecenter is affected (loss of electricity due to a severe storm), the supervisor may grant administrative leave.

Since the Office of Personnel Management is not likely to announce an "adjusted work dismissal" policy to permit the early dismissal of Federal employees when an emergency develops during normal work hours, decisions to exempt employees from continuing to work the remainder of the workday are site specific and depend on the circumstances at the location where the employee is currently working (conventional office, telecenter, or home). If, however, the employee knows before the workday begins, that it will be impossible to work at a telecenter or home on a day he/she is scheduled to telework, the employee is to report to the conventional office to work, if possible.

**Workers' Compensation.** Teleworking employees are covered by the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Federal Employees Compensation Act and qualify for continuation of pay or workers' compensation for on-the-job injury or occupational illness. This is one reason that it is vital that a specific authorized work location must be identified in advance and adhered to by the employee. (See further discussion below in section titled, "FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ISSUES.")

The supervisor's signature on the request for compensation attests only to what the supervisor can reasonably know, whether the event occurred at the conventional work site or at an alternative work site during official duty. Under normal circumstances, supervisors are often not present when an employee sustains an injury. Employees, in all situations, bear responsibility for informing their immediate supervisor of an injury at the earliest time possible. They must also provide details to the Department of Labor when filing a claim.

For employees who currently are receiving continuation of pay or workers' compensation, telework arrangements can help put injured employees back to work and take them off the workers' compensation rolls. Also, supervisors may be able to find work that such employees are able to perform at home, or to "restructure" existing work so that some of it may be completed at home.

**Duty Station.** For pay purposes, the "official duty station" is the employee's conventional office. The teleworking employee's official duty station serves as the basis for determining special

salary rates.

## FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ISSUES

**Home Alternative Office.** A specific authorized work location for performance of work-at-home duties must be identified in advance. Requirements will vary depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed to perform the work. At a minimum, employees should be able to easily communicate by telephone with the supervisor during the work-at-home day. In addition, employees are responsible for verifying and ensuring that their homes comply with health and safety requirements. Home offices must be clean and free of obstructions. The home must be in compliance with all building codes and free of hazardous materials. A supervisor may deny an employee the opportunity to participate or may rescind a telecommuting agreement based on safety problems or suspected hazardous materials in the home. The supervisor may also inspect the home office for compliance with health and safety requirements when deemed appropriate. [See Attachment 2 - Safety Checklist]

*Procedures regarding the purchase or transfer and installation of Government-owned equipment for its teleworking employees will be [clarified]. Such equipment is to be used only for official business and the Government retains ownership and control of the hardware, software and data. In these situations, the Government is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of such equipment. Teleworking employees must notify their supervisors immediately of any malfunction of Government-owned equipment.*

***Only hardware and software configuration procured by the Government and authorized by the approving official for the telework agreement should be installed on the Government owned computers. Under no circumstances will employees be allowed to add non-Government owned or unauthorized hardware or software to the Government-owned computer.***

If the teleworking employee elects to use his or her personal computer equipment at home, the employee is responsible for the purchasing, servicing, and maintenance costs associated with that equipment. The Government will not be liable for reimbursing employees for such costs.

***For official Government business only and specific to the telework arrangement, appropriated funds may be used to pay for telephone line installation and monthly service charges for telephone, cable, or ISDN lines in the private residence of teleworking employees. However, the Government cannot pay for installation or monthly services charges for a single telephone, cable, or ISDN line that will be used for both Government and personal business purposes. Government calling cards are to be used by teleworking employee to make long distance telephone calls to conduct official government business.***

The teleworking employee is expected to pay for all costs incurred in operating an alternative office at home. As a consequence, the following represent cost issues for employees electing to work at home:

- The government will not reimburse employees for home utility costs associated with working at home. Potential savings to the employee resulting from reduced commuting, meals, etc. may offset any incidental increase in utility expenses.
- If the employee elects to furnish his or her own workstation at home, the government will not reimburse the employee for the purchasing costs. In addition, the employee is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of such equipment. Note: A typical workstation requires the following: 1) a personal computer; 2) a modem; 3) telecommunications software; 4) Internet service; 5) Internet browser software; 6) anti-virus software; and 7) general purpose software (e.g. word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation graphics software).

**Telework Center Office.** Telework centers which may be utilized are those established by the General Services Administration. For a fee (per work station, per month, and depending on location), employees will have access to a wide array of up-to-date equipment, including modular work stations, a telephone with local and FTS 2000 service, a high speed computer with a color monitor and modem, laser printer, facsimile machine, multi-function copier, conference and storage space.

The Bureau will establish procedures to consolidate and manage requests for work stations within the Federal Telecenters and establish one agreement per Bureau for all its operating units. Payment to the General Services Administration will be made by the Bureau from one account with individual offices providing reimbursement. All costs must be absorbed within allocated operating budgets.

At this time, Federal Telecenters are located in the following Washington, D.C. metropolitan area cities:

<u>Maryland</u>	<u>Virginia</u>	<u>West Virginia</u>
Bowie	Fairfax	Ranson
Frederick	Fredericksburg	
Hagerstown	Herndon	
Laurel	Manassas	
Prince Frederick	Stafford	
Waldorf	Sterling	
White Oak	Winchester	
	Woodbridge	

## COMPUTER SOFTWARE COPYRIGHTS

Where individual license agreements allow for computer software to be installed on multiple computers, as long as only one is in use at any given time, employees may install Government-licensed computer software on the home office computer, to perform official work. Each software manufacturer's license agreement's terms must be examined on a case by case basis to

determine whether or not this is permissible. This will reduce out-of-pocket expenses for the employee, while expanding the nature of work that may be performed at the home alternative office.

## **PRIVACY ACT, SENSITIVE OR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION**

Decisions regarding the proper use and handling of sensitive data, as well as records subject to the Privacy Act, are delegated to individual supervisors who permit employees to work at home. Care must be taken to ensure records subject to the Privacy Act and sensitive non-classified data are not disclosed to anyone except those who are authorized access to perform their duties.

**Classified data may not be removed from employees' official work sites to off-site locations.**

## **SECURE OPERATIONS**

While some work activities involving electronic access to information will be carried out through the Internet, it will be necessary to do so under the protection of a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) feature. This SSL capability, built into the Internet "browser" software, prevents others connected to the Internet from viewing data as it passes through Internet servers.

The following operations are currently secure via the Internet, for DOC employees, while away from secure DOC network facilities:

- Electronic Mail Service - Send and receive electronic mail messages; transfer electronic files to/from DOC network drives, but not to/from employee's local personal computer drives at their conventional office.
- Electronic Calendar - Full access and functionality through office's calendaring software.

## **PREPARING FOR THE TELEWORK ARRANGEMENT**

The following actions are to be taken when establishing a telework arrangement:

- The employee and supervisor discuss the telecommuting arrangements and type of work projected to be done by the employee at an alternative work site.
- The employee and supervisor complete the Telework Agreement and, if working from home, the self-certification safety checklist. **[See Attachment 2]**
- The supervisor forwards the Telework Agreement to the next higher level management official for approval.
- Depending on the alternative office chosen (employee's home or Federal Telecenter), one of the following actions will be necessary:

- To use a GSA Federal Telecenter, arrangements must first be made to tentatively reserve a work station for the employee at the desired telecenter.
- If the employee will use his/her home equipment, arrangements must be made to:
  - Borrow software installation disks (or CDS) and installation instructions for installing on the employee's personal computer at home (if software package's licensing agreement allows); and
  - Obtain information required for accessing the secured operations of the conventional office.

## **TELEWORK ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

As a supplement to written materials, orientation sessions on the basics of the DOC Telework Program will ensure a common understanding of its requirements. Employee participants and their supervisors must attend a orientation session prior to participation. Such training will be coordinated by the Bureau's or Organization's servicing human resources office.

DRAFT



## ATTACHMENT 1 - TELEWORK AGREEMENT

The following constitutes an agreement on the terms and conditions of the telework arrangement made under the provisions of the Department of Commerce (DOC)/NOAA/OAR Telework Program between:

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Employee volunteers to participate in the Telework Program. Employee voluntarily agrees to work at the employer-approved alternative workplace indicated below. Supervisor concurs with employee's participation. Employee and supervisor agree to adhere to the applicable telework guidelines and policies established by the DOC/NOAA/OAR.

2. Choose one:

- Employee will participate in the telework program on a regularly-scheduled, long-term basis, beginning \_\_\_\_\_.
- Employee will participate in the telework program on an regularly-scheduled, short-term basis, beginning \_\_\_\_\_, and ending no later than \_\_\_\_\_, to accommodate special needs.
- Employee will participate in the telework program on a non-regularly scheduled, episodic basis, beginning \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Employee's most recent performance rating of record and current performance must be at least "satisfactory" or the equivalent. The employee will complete assigned work according to supervisor's guidance and direction, and standards stated in the employee's performance plan.

4. Employee's official tour of duty is as follows:

Work Hours: (If employee is on a flexible work schedule, indicate core hours.)

Pay Period Week 1:

Pay Period Week 2:

Location: (“C” - Conventional Office; “A” - Alternative Office)

Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri  
Pay Period Week 1:  
Pay Period Week 2:

5. Employee’s official duty station is: \_\_\_\_\_

(The conventional Federal office is the official duty station for purposes of special salary rates.)

The alternative duty station is: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Employee’s timekeeper will retain a copy of the employee’s telework schedule. The supervisor and employee are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of time and attendance reported for work at the official duty station and the alternative workplace.

7. Employee will follow established office procedures for requesting and obtaining approval of leave.

8. Employee agrees to work overtime only when ordered and approved by the supervisor in writing and in advance of working the overtime. Working overtime without such approval may result in termination of the telecommuting privilege and/or other appropriate action.

9. If the employee provides his/her own equipment, he/she is responsible for purchase, service, and maintenance costs. The government will **not** be liable for reimbursing employees for such costs. If the Government loans equipment to the employee, the employee must protect the equipment in accordance with applicable procedures. Government-owned equipment will be serviced and maintained by the Government. The employee is responsible for returning Government-owned equipment when maintenance is necessary, when terminating participation in the telework program or when no longer employed by the Organization identified in this agreement.

10. The employee agrees to permit the Government to inspect the alternative workplace during the employee’s normal working hours to ensure proper maintenance of Government-owned property and conformance with health and safety standards.

11. The employee is covered under the Federal Employee’s Compensation Act if injured in the course of actually performing official duties at the official duty station or the alternative duty station. The employee agrees to notify the supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that

occurs at the alternative workplace. The supervisor will investigate such a report immediately.

12. The government will not be liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property during the course of performance of official duties or while using Government equipment in the employee's residence, except to the extent the Government is held liable by Federal Tort Claims Act claims or claims arising under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act.

13. The government will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs (e.g., utilities) whatsoever, associated with the use of the employee's residence as the alternate work site. By participating in the OAR Telework Program, the employee does not relinquish any entitlement to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Government, as provided for by Statute and implementing regulations.

14. (Applicable for those employees who telework from their home) I have completed, signed, and attached the self-certification checklist designed to assess the overall safety of my alternate work site (please check here) \_\_\_\_\_.

15. (If applicable) The following additional conditions apply to this agreement:

**Employee**      **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor**      **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approving  
Official**      **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT

## ATTACHMENT 2 - SELF-CERTIFICATION SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR HOME-BASED TELECOMMUTERS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELECOMMUTING  
COORDINATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Telecommuter:

The following checklist is designed to assess the overall safety of your alternate duty station. Please read and complete the self-certification safety checklist. Upon completion, you and your supervisor should sign and date the checklist in the spaces provided.

The alternate duty station is \_\_\_\_\_.

Describe the designated work area in the alternate duty station:

\_\_\_\_\_.

### A. WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

1. Are temperature, noise, ventilation, and lighting levels adequate for maintaining your normal level of job performance? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

2. Are all stairs with 4 or more steps equipped with handrails?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

3. Are all circuit breakers and/or fuses in the electrical panel labeled as to intended service?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

4. Do circuit breakers clearly indicate if they are in the open or closed position?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

5. Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that would cause physical harm (frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires, flexible wires running through walls, exposed wires to the ceiling)?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

6. Will the building's electrical system permit the grounding of electrical equipment?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

7. Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

8. Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

9. Do chairs have any loose casters (wheels) and are the rungs and legs of the chairs sturdy?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

10. Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

11. Is the office space neat, clean, and free of excessive amounts of combustibles?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

12. Are floor surfaces clean, dry, level, and free of worn or frayed seams?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

13. Are carpets well secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

14. Is there enough light for reading?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**B. COMPUTER WORKSTATION (IF APPLICABLE)**

1. Is your chair adjustable?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

2. Do you know how to adjust your chair?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

3. Is your back adequately supported by a backrest?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

4. Are your feet on the floor or fully supported by a footrest?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

5. Are you satisfied with the placement of your VDT and keyboard?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

6. Is it easy to read the text on your screen?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

7. Do you need a document holder?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

8. Do you have enough leg room at your desk?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

9. Is the VDT screen free from noticeable glare?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

10. Is the top of the VDT screen eye level?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

11. Is there space to rest the arms while not keying?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

12. When keying, are your forearms close to parallel with the floor?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

13. Are your wrists fairly straight when keying?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Immediate Supervisor's Signature Date

Approved [ ] Disapproved [ ]

PLEASE RETURN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO YOUR SUPERVISOR

Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Telework Program

August 2001

### ATTACHMENT 3 - POSITION SCREEN-OUT CRITERIA AND JUSTIFICATION FOR TELEWORK ARRANGEMENT

Employee's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title, Series, Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1. Frequent face-to-face contacts or telephone communications with clients and/or co-workers is vital in performing the work effectively. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

2. Frequent supervisory review, while work is in progress, is required as a routine part of this job. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

3. Work is not of a portable nature which is required to effectively perform the project off-site. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

4. Access to technology, specialized equipment, or materials are not available at the off-site location. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

5. Job tasks are not measurable and/or project-oriented which is required to effectively perform the project off-site. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

6. Security or technical reasons prevent information from being used at the alternate duty station which is needed to perform the work effectively. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

7. Most recent performance rating is Marginal or Unacceptable. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

8. Are there any viable Federal Telework Centers available to the employee vs. working at home? If there are, and the decision is to work at home, please provide justification below. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

9. Are there dependent children or adults who will be at the alternate duty station during the times the employee is scheduled to work AND may require the attention of the employee during these times? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

**10. Are there any other kinds of disturbances which would distract the employee from performing work at the alternate duty station?** YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

**11. Are there any other kinds of factors that would prevent this employee from working at an off-site location?** YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

**Answering YES to one or more of the above questions will normally eliminate a person from consideration in the telecommuting program. Provide explanation below if employee is screened out on one or more criteria and is still being recommended for the telecommuting program.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Telework Approved** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telework Disapproved** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Supervisor's Signature** **Date**

DRAFT